

Behind the Plough-Tail: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Socio-Economic Status of Successful Farmers in Marathwada

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Abstract:

The study of 200 farmers in the drought affected Marathwada region reveals that socio-economic progress in agriculture is possible even under challenging environmental conditions when farmers adopt innovative and sustainable practices. The findings indicate that factors such as education, access to irrigation, use of modern technology, financial planning, government assistance and strong social support system have played a significant role in improving the economic stability and social status of the farmers. Despite recurring droughts and agrarian difficulties, the successful farmers demonstrated resilience, adaptability and entrepreneurial skills that enabled them to enhance productivity and secure better livelihood. This research paper highlights the sustainable agricultural development and socio-economic upliftment in Marathwada. Can be achieved through a combination of farmer initiative, institutional support, and scientific farming practices.

INTRODUCTION

The unavailability of the urban work and the unsustainable nature of the farming have led to the suicides of farmers. Various economic, social, political, individual and environmental crises are forcing the farmers to commit suicides. Among all indebtedness remains the primary reason why a farmer commits suicide. Though the waves of farmer suicides have taken place mostly in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh but Marathwada & Vidarbha region was the epicenter. This was brought the need look at the farmers issues from a different perspective. Looking a solution in traditional way is not going to answer the farmers' plight. Marathwada being the central region which lacks the farmable conditions few of the farmers have overcome this issue and have highlighted how to do farming with scarce resources

The Present Study has the following objective:

To analyze the socio-economic condition of successful farmers in drought affected Marathwada region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is confined Marathwada Region in Maharashtra state. The study is based on primary data. Interview schedule was administered for collecting the primary data. 200 farmers using modern technology like water management techniques were selected by using stratified random sampling technique and snowball method from the region. 25 farmers were selected from each district from Marathwada region. Collected data was analyzed by using SPSS.

Importance of the Study:

The present research would set a new approach against the backdrop of plethora of research concentrating on farmer's suicide, displacement, migration, scarcity of resources, lack of modern methods and technology, lack of skilled labour, environmental imbalances and irregularities, social unjust structure and improper division of labour. The approach believes that the positivity of thought and positive attitude would sustain the agriculture in the drought prone conditions. This kind of studies will encourage policy makers to rethink and contemplate the principles of political and economic assistance and reconstruction. This would also function as a tool to disseminate innovations, certain management strategies to the farmers of other regions. Hopefully this would also be applicable to other sectors.

The socio-economic status of farmers in the drought-prone Marathwada region of Maharashtra has become an important area of study due to the persistent agrarian crisis, water scarcity and changing agricultural patterns. This research paper aims to analyse the living conditions, economic background, educational level, occupational structure, land holding pattern, , and social conditions of successful farmers who have managed to sustain and improve their livelihood despite adverse climatic conditions. The study focuses on understanding the factors that contributed to their success. By examining the experiences of 200 successful farmers, the chapter highlights the resilience, adaptability, and socio - economic transformation occurring within the farming, community of Marathwada and provides insights for sustainable rural development in route affected regions.

Data Analysis:

Table 1, Education

Sr.no.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	14	7
2	Primary	24	12
3	Secondary	64	32.0
4	Higher Secondary	31	15.5
5	Graduation	39	19.5
6	Post-Graduation	21	10.5
7	Professional Education	07	3.5
Total		200	100

Source: Field Work

Above table shows that attainment of education level among respondents. It is found that 7 % of the respondents are illiterate. 12% of the respondents are primary, 12.3% of the respondents are secondary, 32 % of the respondents are Higher secondary, 19.5 % are Graduate, 10.5 % of them are Post Graduate and 3.5 % respondents are Professionally Educated.. It clearly shows that most of respondents are found secondary educated followed by graduated, higher secondary educated very few of them are professionally educated and some of them are Illiterate.

Table 2. Occupation

Sr.no.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farmer	181	90.5
2	Job	4	2
3	Self-Employment	5	2.5
4	Trader	8	4
5	Labourer	1	0.5
6	Other	1	0.5

Total	200	100
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Source: Field Work

Above table indicates type of occupations of respondents, there are six types of occupations and total number of respondents are 200. 181 (90.5%) of respondents are farmers followed by 8 (4%) respondents are Trader, 5 (2.5%) respondents engaged in self-employment, 4 (2%) respondents are found in service sector and 1 (0.5%) respondent is working as labour. It means most of respondents are farmers and they are engaged in agricultur sector fpllowed by traders, self-employment,service and laboureres.

Table 3. Allied Occupation

Sr.no.	Allied Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	No Allied Occupation	113	56.5
2	Dairy Farming	33	16.5
3	Poultry	14	7
4	Goat Farming	7	3.5
5	Fishery	5	2.5
6	Shop	6	3
7	Treder	2	1
8	Farmer	6	3
9	Dairy Farming & Fishery	11	5.5
10	Dairy Farming & Poultry	1	0.5
11	Dairy Farming & Goat Farming	2	1
Total		200	100

Source: Field Work

Above table indicates status of allied occupations of the respondents. 113 (56.5%) respondents dont do any allied occupation, 33(16.5%) respondents found diong diary farming as allied occupation, 14 (7%) respondents are found in poultry farming, 11 (5.5%) repondents are found in dairy farming and fishery sector, 7 (3.5%) respondents are found in goat farming ,6 (3%) respondents are found as a shopkeeper they holds their own shops at village, 5 (2.5%) respondents are engaged in fishery, 2 (1%) respondents are engaged in trading. It concluded that most of respondents are not engaged in any allied occupation.

Table 4. Year wise Income and Expenditure (in a Acre)

Districiptive Analysis						
		No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
2019	Income	200	0.00	1900000.00	453580.0000	371158.68229
	Expenditure	200	0.00	600000.00	139520.0000	122319.95116

2020	Income	200	0.00	5000000.00	441370.0000	603754.86981
	Expenditure	200	0.00	500000.00	129005.0000	102176.63775
2021	Income	200	0.00	3500000.00	535470.0000	441399.52060
	Expenditure	200	0.00	814000.00	169375.0000	133848.50198
Total Income		200	0.00	6090000.00	1430420.0000	1128674.86387
TotalExpenditure		200	0.00	1810000.00	437900.0000	324334.16913

Source: Field Work

The analysis of income and expenditure per acre from 2019 to 2021 indicates a gradual improvement in the financial performances of the respondents. In 2019, the mean in income per acre was ₹4,53,580 with a standard deviation of ₹3,71,158.68, showing moderate variation in income levels among respondents, while the mean expenditure was ₹1,39,552 with a standard deviation of ₹1,22,319.95. In 2020, the mean income slightly decreased to ₹4,41,370; however, the standard deviation increased sharply to ₹6,03,754.87, indicating a much wider disparity in income distribution, where some respondents earned exceptionally high incomes while others earned very little or no. Expenditure during 2020 slightly declined to a mean of ₹1,29,005 with relatively lower variation. In 2021, the mean income increased significantly to ₹5,35,470, reflecting improved, agricultural or production performance, per acre, while the standard deviation of ₹4,41,399.5 to suggest continued ability among respondents. The mean expenditure also rose to ₹1,69,375 with a standard deviation of rupees 1,33,848.50, indicating increased investment in cultivation, production or operational activities. The overall total mean income for the three years was ₹14,30,042 per acre, whereas the total mean expenditure was ₹4,37,900 per acre. The high standard deviation values for total income and expenditure reveal substantial differences in economic performance across respondents.

Table 5. Number of Family Members and Farming

			Nil	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13& Above	Total
Number of Members in Family	Female	Number	2	147	47	3	1	~	200
		Percentage	1.0	73.5	23.5	1.5	0.5	~	100
	Male	Number	2	146	48	2	1	1	200
		Percentage	1.0	73.0	24.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	100
	Children	Number	45	109	40	5	1	~	200
		Percentage	22.5	54.5	20.0	2.5	0.5	~	100
Number of Members in Farming	Female	Number	26	158	15	1	~	~	200
		Percentage	13.0	79.0	7.5	0.5	~	~	100
	Male	Number	7	173	19	~	~	1	200
		Percentage	3.5	86.5	9.5	~	~	0.5	100
	Children	Number	194	6	~	~	~	~	200
		Percentage	97.0	3.0	~	~	~	~	100

Source: Field Work

Above table gives informatoin about numbres of family members are in respondents family as well as numbers of family members working in agriculture. 147 families have 1-3 females, 47 families have 4-6 female, 3 dfamilies have 7-9 females and 1 family has 10-12 females in their family as well as 146 families have 1-3 males, 48 families have 4-6 males, 2 families have 7-9 males, 1 family has 10-12 males and 1 family has more tahn 13 males in their family. 2 families dosent have femele members in family and 2 families dosent have male

members in family. 45 families responded that they dont have children in their family, 109 families responded they have 1-3 children's in their family, 40 respondents responded there are 4-6 children's are in their family. 158 respondents said 1-3 female members of their family are engaged in agriculture, 15 respondents said 4-6 female members are engaged in agriculture and 1 respondents said 7-9 female members of his family are engaged in agriculture and 26 respondents said females are not engaged in agriculture. 173 respondents said 1-3 males age working in agriculture, 19 families said 4-6 males are working in agriculture, 1 respondent replied more than 13 male members are engaged in agriculture if his family and 7 families replied that no male are engaged of their family in agriculture. 6 families responded 1-3 children's are engaged in agriculture and 194 families replied no any children's are engaged in agriculture.

Table 6. Available Equipment's for Farming

Sr. no.	Available Equipment's for Farming	Frequency	Percentage
1	No Equipment	15	7.5
2	Tractor	21	10.5
3	Small Tractor	11	5.5
4	Power Tailor	7	3.5
5	Bullock Cart	63	31.5
6	Other	10	5.0
7	Big Tractor & Small Tractor	17	8.5
8	Big Tractor & Sewage Control	5	2.5
9	Tractor & Bullock Cart	21	10.5
10	Tractor & Tokenyantr (By Manpower)	2	1.0
11	Small Tractor & Sewage Control	1	0.5
12	Small Tractor & Bullock Cart	17	8.5
13	Sewage Control & Bullock Cart	3	1.5
14	Big Tractor, Small Tractor & Bullock Cart	4	2.0
15	Small Tractor, Power Tailor & Bullock Cart	3	1.5
Total		200	100.0

Source: Field Work

Above table shows availability of equipments for farming with the respondents. There are 200 respondents selected for the present study out of them 15 respondents dont have any ahriculturl equipment for farming. 21 respondents have their own tractor for land cultivation, 11 respondents have small tractor for multipurpose use in agriculture, 7 respondents have power tailor for goods trasportation purpose, 63 rspndents are using bullock cart it means they are doing farming with the help of bull as well as modern technology. 17 respondents have their own big tractor as well as small tractors 5 respondents have sewage control machine. 21 respondents have tractor as well as bullock cart it indicates that this farmer are doing modern farming. 17 respondents have small tractor & bullock cart, 4 respondents have small tractor, big tractor & bullock cart. It concluded that most of respondents are holding bg & samll tractors as well as bullock cart as compaire to this other equipments are less in use as well as in holding.

Table 7. Place of Savings

Sr. no.	Place of Savings	Frequency	Percentage
1	Not Applicable	17	8.5
2	Cash With Own	9	4.5
3	Commercial Banks	51	25.5
4	Private Banks	1	0.5
5	Cash With Own & Co-Operative Institutes	19	9.5
6	Cash With Own & Commercial Banks	18	9.0
7	Co-operative Institutes & Commercial Banks	25	12.5
8	Co-operative Institutes & Private Banks	14	7.0
9	Commercial Banks & Private Banks	15	7.5
10	Commercial Banks & Bima Agency	31	15.5
Total		200	100

Source: Field Work

Above table indicates that the place of savings of respondents. 183 respondents are doing saving on their name at various places and 17 respondents are not doing saving at anywhere. 9 respondents out of 183 stated that they are using cash as a savings with them. 51 respondents said that they have account at commercial bank and they used to save money at the same place. 1 respondent stated he is doing saving at private bank. 19 respondents said that they are using cash with them as well as doing savings at co-operative banks. 18 respondents responded that they are using cash with them as well as doing saving at commercial banks. 25 respondents said they are doing their saving at commercial banks & co-operative banks. 14 respondents stated that they are doing their savings at co-operatives banks & private banks. 15 respondents are doing savings at commercial banks as well as private banks and 31 respondents are doing savings at commercial banks & bima agencies. It clearly indicating that most of respondents are found doing savings at commercial banks followed by co-operative banks and private banks as compare to other places of savings.

Table 3.8. Sources of Loan Borrowings

Sr. no.	Sources of Loan Borrowings	Frequency
1	Money Lender	2
2	Friends / Relatives	3
3	Trader / Landlord	11
4	Co-operative Banks	60
5	Self Help Group	1
6	Rural Banks	53

7	Trader & Other	25
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Source: Field Work

Above table indicates that numbers of respondents are borrowing loan and sources of loan borrowing. 2 respondents said that they have taken loan from money lender, 3 respondents stated that they have taken loan from friends as well as relatives, 11 respondents respondend they have taken loan from trader and landlord,60 respondents stated that thry have taken loan from co-operative banks. 53 respondents have taken loan from rural banks and 25 respondent have found taken loan from trader abd other sources, 1 respondent have found taken loan from self help group. Its clearly denpted that above 50% of the respondents have taken loan from bank followed by traders, landlords and money lender.

Table 9. Working Hours in Land

Sr. no.	Working Hours In Land	Frequency	Percentage
1	1Hour	1	0.5
2	5 Hours	6	3.0
3	6 Hours	5	2.5
4	7 Hours	5	2.5
5	8 Hours	22	11.0
6	10 Hours	37	18.5
7	12 Hours	9	4.5
8	15 Hours	3	1.5
9	Full Time	106	53.0
10	Can not Tell	6	3.0
Total		200	100.0

Source: Field Work

Above table indicates that working hours of respondents working as a farmer. 106 (53%) of the respondents are said that they are working full time in cultivation of agriculture. 37 (18.5%) of the respondents are working 10 hours daily in the farm, 22 (11%) of the respondents stated that they are working 8 hours, 16 (8%) of the respondents said they are working 5-7 hours in the farm on daily basis. 9 (4.5%) of the respondents are working 12 hours daily as farmer, 6 (3%) of the respondents are working upto 15 hours and 1 (0.5%) respondent is working 1 heure and 6 (3%) respondents said they can not tell how much time they worked. Above information indicates that most of the farmers are working full time in the farm.

Table 10. Problems Faced While Doing Progressive Farming

Sr. no.	Problems Faced While Doing Progressive Farming	Frequency	Percentage
1	No Problems	89	44.5
2	Opposition of Family	7	3.5
3	Lack of Capital	64	32.0
4	Insult by Sociaty	11	5.5
5	Lack of Capital & Insult by Society	17	8.5
6	Other	12	6.0
Total		200	100.0

Source: Field Work

Above table gives information about problems faced by respondents while doing progressive farming. 89 respondents said they don't face any problem while doing progressive farming. 64 respondents stated that they faced problem of lack of capital when they started to do progressive farming. 17 respondents said they don't face family opposition but they faced problems of lack of capital as well as they are insulted by society. 11 respondents found that insulted by society and 7 respondents are found that they have faced family opposition. 12 respondents said they faced other problems. The numbers of respondents who do not face problems while doing progressive farming is higher followed by respondents who faced problems of lack of capital.

Table 11. Type of Land & Irrigation

Sr. no.	Type of Land & Irrigation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Irrigated	13	6.5
2	Non-Irrigated	17	8.5
3	Irrigated All Time	89	44.5
4	Irrigated Seasonal	56	28.0
5	Irrigated All Time & Seasonal	11	5.5
6	Irrigated All Time & Non-Irrigated	8	4.0
7	Irrigated Seasonal & Non-Irrigated	6	3.0
Total		200	100.0

Source: Field Work

Above table gives information about type of irrigation to the land of respondents. 89 respondents said that they have all time source of irrigation, 56 respondents stated that they have seasonal irrigation system, 17 respondents said that they have non irrigated land, 13 respondents said they have irrigated land, 11 respondents said that they have irrigated land for all time as well as they have some seasonal irrigated land, 8 respondents stated that they have all time irrigated land also they have non irrigated land and 6 respondents said that they have seasonal irrigation system as well as they are holding non irrigated land. It is concluded that above 50% of respondents have full time irrigated land as compared to other type of land.

Table 12. Income and Expenditure after Modernization

Statistical Analysis					
	Number	Minimum	Maximum	(Mean)	(Std.Deviation)
Before Modernization- Income	200	0.00	1400000.00	199900.00	232674.21
Before Modernization- Expenditure	200	0.00	600000.00	80720.00	95898.82
First Year- Income	200	0.00	4000000.00	445925.00	530924.36
First Year-Expenditure	200	0.00	1500000.00	147125.00	190763.05
Second Year- Income	200	0.00	5000000.00	569435.00	622074.08

Second Year-Expenditure	200	0.00	1700000.00	190530.00	222066.20
Third Year- Income	200	0.00	6000000.00	750750.00	775852.55
Third Year-Expenditure	200	0.00	1900000.00	263270.00	292265.28

Source: Field Work

The descriptive statistics indicates a significant improvement in both income and expenditure after modernization 200 respondents studied. Before modernization, the mean income was ₹1,99,900 with a high standard deviation of ₹ 2,32,674.21, showing considerable variation in earnings among respondents. Similarly, the mean expenditure was ₹80,720 with a standard deviation of ₹95,898.82, indicating uneven spending patterns. After modernization, income increased steadily over the years, with the mean rising to ₹4,45,925 in the first year, ₹5,69,435 in the second year and 7,50,750 in the third year. The corresponding standard deviation values also increased from ₹5,30,924.36 to ₹775852.55, suggesting that although overall earnings improved, the differences in income levels among respondents became wider over time. Expenditure also showed continuous growth, increasing from a mean of ₹1,47,125 in the 1st year to ₹2,63,270 in the third year, while the standard deviation rose from ₹1,90,763.052 to ₹2,92,265.28, indicating substantial variation in expenditure behavior, the standard deviation value used for both income and expenditure wear high in all periods and increased over time, which indicates wide variation among respondents. This means that while modernization improved the overall financial condition, the extent of improvement, deferred significantly among individuals or units, with some achieving very high growth while others experienced moderate programs. This increasing maximum values of income and expenditure for their support. It means modernization created opportunities for substantial financial expansion, whereas the high standard deviation value reveals that the benefits of modernization, we are not equally experienced by all respondents.

Table No. 13. Factor wise Expenditure

Sr.no	Factor / Content	Total No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Capital	200	.00	1650000.00	130345.0000	172230.69715
2	Pre (Cultivation)	200	.00	1200000.00	32712.5000	107246.80873
3	Seed	200	.00	300000.00	21847.5000	34011.04452
4	Inter Cultivation (Weed-sprinkle)	200	.00	500000.00	19465.0000	44581.73877
5	Insect and disease management	200	.00	650000.00	23152.5000	53567.88295
6	Herbicide management	200	.00	230000.00	7936.0000	18845.72660
7	Irrigation	200	.00	400000.00	20735.0000	41863.76895
8	Crop harvesting	200	.00	450000.00	20740.0000	41655.82389
9	Storage / Processing	200	.00	600000.00	8490.0000	44408.11076
10	Fertilizer management	200	.00	600000.00	25114.0000	54261.99799
11	Transportation	200	.00	500000.00	10377.5000	37473.039747

Source: Field Work

The above table explains the factor wise expenditure done by the farmers for various table explains the detail expenditure from seed to transportation for market. We could find factor wise minimum, maximum expenditure, mean and to show the variation of factor wise expenditure standard deviation has been

calculated. It is clearly seen from the table that standard deviation is very high for all the factors, it means there are high variations in the expenditure in process of farming. The highest expenditure reported by the respondent is 16,50,000 rupees. on capital and mean for capital expenditure is 13,345 Rs. The maximum amount reported for pre cultivation isRs. 12 lakhs. According to the respondents capital & pre cultivation are the initial investment in farming so that we should have spent maximum amount for these factors. The mean value for seed isRs. 21,847 and for inter cultivation (weed & sprinkle), it is Rs. 19465. It is also found from the data that lowest amount should be spent on herbicide management, followed by storage and transportation. For irrigation, it takes maximum of Rs. 4 lakh. It means proper management is necessary at all the stages of farming.

Table 14. Motives to turn towards farming

Sr.no	Motives to turn towards farming	Frequency	Percentage
1	Experienced Farmer	37	18.5
2	No Other Service	26	13
3	Tradition and No Need of Capital Investment	66	33
4	Increased Income	14	7
5	Farming as Per Convenience	3	1.5
6	Service and Farming	17	8.5
7	Traditional Occupation	28	14
8	Superannuated form Service	2	1
9	Agriculture Related Training	1	0.5
10	Can't Explain	6	3.0
Total		200	100

Source: Field Work

Above table indicates the motives to turn towards farming. 37 respondents said they experienced farmers and so that they are doing farming, 26 respondents said they don't have any other work to do other than farming, 66 respondents said farming is their traditional occupation as well as there is no need of capital investment in farming. 14 respondents said that their income increased due to farming, 3 respondents stated they are engaged in farming as per their convenience, 17 respondents said that they are in service sector as well as they are doing farming, 28 respondents said farming is their traditional occupation, 2 respondents said they are superannuated from service hence they are doing farming, 1 respondent said he got agricultural training and got motivated toward farming, 6 respondents said they can't explain why they are engaged in farming sector.

Table 15. Problems Faced by the Respondents

Sr. no.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unavailability of labour	05	2.5
2	Increasing production cost and price of fertilizers	55	27.5

3	Not getting proper price and lack of electricity	09	4.5
4	Increasing production cost & Price of fertilizers and scarcity of water	28	14.0
5	Increasing production cost & price of fertilizers, lack of electricity, increasing disease	37	18.5
6	All of the above	66	33
	Total	200	100.00

Source: Field Work

The above table explains about the problems faced by the respondents. It is found from the survey that farmers are facing the problems like scarcity of labour, electricity, and water also. They are also facing problems of increasing process of fertilizers and production cost and diseases aswell. 33% respondents reported that they are facing the above problems. 27.5 respondents have enough water, labour and electricity but at the same time, they are facing the problem of increasing production cost and increasing prices of fertilizers. According to the respondents, if we could solve the problems then other farmers from *Marathwada* will be able to increase their income from farming.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the social economic status and management strategies of 200 successful farmers from *Marathwada* region to understand the factors contributing to their agricultural success and livelihood improvements. The findings revealed that most respondents belonged to the middle age group of 31 to 50 years with male farmers dominating the sample. A majority of respondents were Hindus and lived in joint families. Educationally, most farmers had completed higher secondary or secondary education, while only a few were professional, educated or literate. Farming was the primary occupation for the majority of respondents and many were also engaged in allied activities such as dairy farming, poultry, goat, farming, and fisheries, which supplement their income and livelihood security.

Farmers reported several challenges, including labor, scarcity, irregular electricity, supply, water shortage, rising fertilizer prices, increasing production costs, and crop disease. Despite these problems, most respondents remain optimistic and motivated to improve their farming systems.

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